

ASRS Talking Points

Teachers and other education employees don't come into the profession to get rich but to make the world better for students. We build a secure community by taking on the responsibility of educating students across the state, one neighborhood school at a time. It's a responsibility that we accept gladly and take seriously.

ASRS Is a Sound and Secure System

- The Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS), the current retirement system for educators, creates security for individuals and the state.
- ASRS is sound because of effective management and because it is driven by employee contributions.
- When the market is down, it isn't taxpayer subsidies, but employee contributions, that make up the difference.
- ASRS has already undergone significant changes recently to keep it sound – changes that affect those entering the system after July 1, 2011. These changes include adding to the length of service – adding “points” – before one earns the full amount; and using a 60- rather than a 36-month average in the benefit calculation.

Educators Contribute to Hard-Earned Retirement

- Employee contributions are a responsibility that educators embrace as part of the sound management of the retirement system.
- Educators know that the portion of their salary paid into retirement will come back to help them live with respect and independence after they retire.
- Educators take on this responsibility to earn a security that is fair after finishing a career of educating our students.

Educators Are Not to Blame for Arizona's Financial Crisis

- The employer contribution paid by districts comes from state education funding and is accounted for in a district's budget.
- The financial hardship that districts currently face has been brought on by years of severe cuts in state education funding – over a billion dollars in cuts over the last three fiscal years.
- It is the state legislature that has created financial pressure, failing to live up to the constitutional responsibility to fund appropriately a public education system.
- We should not penalize those who educate students for the irresponsibility of the legislature.

Don't Let Big Business Raid Educators' Retirement

- The only interests who will gain from tampering with the current system are big banks and big investment companies who want to take a portion of retirement funds and charge teachers for managing their own money even as they put it at much greater risk.
- This is another attempt to take money out of educators' hands and give it to big banks and big investment companies.

Voters Support ASRS

- In 1998, voters protected the current system from political tampering – just as they did by protecting Early Childhood Education Funding in the last election.
- Voters did this to keep the system safe and in balance.

Breaking ASRS Will Not Fix Economy

- Undermining the system will put thousands of teachers at risk and put the state at risk as well.
- Tampering with ASRS will increase the likelihood that educators will need more assistance from the state at some point after they retire rather than being able to live with dignity and contribute to a strong economy.